The Claims:

Following is a complete listing of the claims pending in the application:

1.   (Previously Presented) A method of distributing software with a computer system to a user comprising the acts of:

recording data on a fixed medium in the computer system;

providing for transfer of the computer system to the user; and

controlling access to the data in the computer system by:

in response to receiving a first request for access to the data, contacting a party authorized to grant access to the data;

if the party provides authorization to grant access to the data, recording the authorization in the computer system and granting a first access to the data based on the recorded authorization; and

in response to receiving at least a second request for access to the data, granting a second access to the data based on the authorization recorded in the computer system.

2.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 1 wherein the act of recording data on the fixed medium includes recording software application program instructions on the fixed medium.

3.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 2 wherein recording software application program instructions on the fixed medium includes recording software application program instructions that enable a. software application that does not depend on continued access to a network for fully functional operation.

4.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 1 wherein the act of recording data on the fixed medium includes recording data on a hard disk drive.

5.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 1 wherein the act of controlling access to the data includes the computer system automatically executing computer readable instructions to contact a party authorized to grant access to the data.

6.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 5 wherein executing computer readable instructions includes executing instructions to activate a network link.

7.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 5 wherein executing computer readable instructions includes executing instructions to activate access to the Internet.

8.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 1 wherein the act of controlling access to the data includes determining if a user has a sufficient account credit to continue access to the data.

9.   (Original) The method of distributing software of claim 1 wherein the act of controlling access to the data includes determining if a user should be billed for accessing the data.

10.   (Previously Presented) A software module used in a computer system operable to provide controlled access to a software application being stored on a fixed medium in the computer system and being distributed with the computer system, the software module operating by:

    detecting a first use of the software application on the computer system;

    in response to detecting the first use, verifying authority to access the software application by:

        contacting a party authorized to grant access to the software application; and

if the party provides authorization to grant access to the software application, recording the authorization in the computer system;

granting a first access to the software application based on the recorded authorization;

detecting at least a second use of the software application on the computer system; and

in response to detecting the second use, granting a second access to the software application based on the authorization recorded in the computer system.

11. (Original) The software module of claim 10 wherein the software application does not depend on continued access to a network for fully functional operation.

12. (Original) The software module of claim 10 wherein the software module and the software application are stored on the computer system during manufacture of the computer system.

13. (Original) The software module of claim 10 wherein verifying authority to access the software application verifies authority of a particular user to access the software application.

14. (Original) The software module of claim 10 wherein verifying authority to access the software application verifies authority of an accessing computer system to access the software application.

15. (Original) The software module of claim 10 wherein verifying authority to access the software application is accomplished through a network connection.

16.   (Original) The software module of claim 10 wherein verifying authority to access the software application is accomplished through an Internet interface.

17.   (Previously Presented)   The software module of claim 10 further comprising:

 if authority is verified, then allowing uninterrupted access to the software application; and

 if authority is not verified, then interrupting access to the software application.

18.   (Original) The software module of claim 17 wherein if authority to access the software application is not verified, then the user is presented with an opportunity to qualify for access to the software application.

19.   (Original) The software module of claim 18 wherein the opportunity to qualify for access to the software application includes generating a request to set up an account.

20.   (Original) The software module of claim 17 wherein if authority to access the software application is not verified, then the user's access to the software application is terminated.

21.   (Previously Presented) A computer system operable to provide controlled access to a software application stored on a fixed medium in the computer system and distributed with the computer system comprising:

 a processor;

 a memory coupled to the processor; and

 a software module executable on the processor and the memory, the software module being responsive to a first activation of the software application by:

  contacting a party authorized to grant access to the software application; and

if the party provides authorization to grant access to the software application, recording the authorization in the memory and granting a first access to the software application based on the recorded authorization;

the software module being further responsive to at least a second activation of the software application by granting a second access to the software application based on the authorization recorded in the memory.

22. (Original) The computer system of claim 21 wherein the accessed software application does not depend on continued access to a network for fully functional operation.

23. (Original) The computer system of claim 21 wherein verifying authority to access the software application verifies authority of a particular user to access the software application.

24. (Original) The computer system of claim 21 wherein verifying authority to access the software application verifies authority of an accessing computer system to access the software application.

25. (Original) The computer system of claim 21 wherein verifying authority to access the software application is accomplished through a network connection.

26. (Original) The computer system of claim 21 wherein verifying authority to access the software application is accomplished through an Internet interface.

27. (Original) The computer system of claim 21 wherein if authority to access the software application is not verified, then the user is presented with an opportunity to qualify for access to the software application.

28.   (Original)   The computer system of claim 26 wherein the opportunity to qualify for access to the software application includes generating a request to set up an account.

29.   (Original)   The computer system of claim 21 wherein if authority to access the software application is not verified, then the user's access to the software application is terminated.